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GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH TO THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND: NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES OF AN INTERSECTORAL NATURE

Report prepared by the United Nations Secretariat

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REPORT ON NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES TO IMPLEMENT THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH TO THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND

CONTENTS

		Page (s)
I.	INTRODUCTION	2
II.	GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS ON NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES (1985-1995)	3-6
III.	STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS ON NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES	7-14
	A. National level	7-11
	B. Regional level	11-13
	C. Global level	13-14
IV.	REVIEW AND APPRAISAL: PROBLEMS ADDRESSED	15-17
	A. National level	15
	B. Regional level	15-16
	C. Global level	16-17
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	17-19
	A. National level	17-18
	B. Regional level	18
	C. Global level	19
ANNEX I.	Status of implementation of national youth policies, national youth coordination mechanisms and national youth programmes of action: as at July 1998	20-21

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to item 9 (a) of the provisional agenda of the first session of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, the United Nations Secretariat (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development, Youth Unit) has prepared the present report. The United Nations General Assembly has been concerned with the issue of national youth policies for many years, especially since 1985, the United Nations International Youth Year (IYY). It put that matter on the global agenda in the Guidelines on Youth adopted for the IYY and reiterated it in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond adopted by the General Assembly in 1995.

In resolution 49/154 of 23 December 1994, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General in close cooperation with Member-States and youth organizations, to evaluate youth programmes that were developed during the follow-up to the IYY and to report to it at its fifty-second session, with a view to ensuring effective implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. In resolution 50/81 of 14 December 1995, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report at its fifty-second session through the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council on the progress made in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

The present report draws upon and updates the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/52/60-E/1997/6) submitted to the General Assembly in 1997. It is based on the replies to a questionnaire received in 1997 from Member-States, organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with youth. It is also based on data collected during 1997-1998 from the above sources to prepare the country profiles on the Global Situation of Youth 2000: Trends and Prospects.

However, this matter of national youth policy should also be viewed in the context of the youth-related issues reflected in the programmes of action adopted by nine world conferences convened by the United Nations since 1992: Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the Vienna Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, Austria, 1993), the Copenhagen Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995), the Conclusions and Recommendations adopted by the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (Cairo, 29 April-8 May 1995), the Beijing Platform of Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (Beijing, 1-15 September 1995), the Programme of Action adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996), the Programme of Action adopted by the World Food Summit (Rome, 3-17 November 1996), the Programme of Action adopted by the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Earth Summit Plus Five (New York, 23-27 June 1997) and by the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (New

York, 8-10 June 1998).

II. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS ON NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES (1985-1995)

The first set of recommendations of the General Assembly on the issue of national youth policies were made in 1985 and were contained in the Guidelines for Further Planning and Suitable Follow-Up in the Field of Youth (document A/40/256 endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 40/14 of December 1985). In section I of the Guidelines, the Assembly indicated that future development may depend upon the ability of Governments to manage substantial changes and improve the situation of youth under conditions of limited or moderate growth and considerable international uncertainty. Achieving the necessary combination of macro-economic and micro-economic and macro-social strategies had been one of the major problems faced by many Governments. Therefore it said that it was extremely important to improve the managerial abilities of Governments, as well as policy-making and the development of infrastructures in the field of youth. The Assembly indicated that the Guidelines were intended to contribute to those general objectives. However, in addition to those more macro socio-economic concerns regarding youth, the Assembly recalled that many of the issues confronting youth were symptoms of the larger processes of personal development young people undergo. It recommended that attempts to find solutions should address the underlying processes of the development of the concepts of self, creating opportunities for self-realization and for accepting responsibilities vis-à-vis other human beings. Therefore, it recommended that while measures may be developed by both governmental and non-governmental organizations to reach young people during their process of development, they should respond to individual societal contexts, priorities and special needs. The Assembly stated that the Guidelines were intended to contribute to the work of specific policy development formulation in many countries where a great willingness to assist youth exists, but in which the necessary practical steps towards comprehensive and effective action are restricted by the lack of a policy framework.

The Assembly consequently recommended, as appropriate to national circumstances, the following principal aspects of national youth policy development:

(a) The place and role of youth in society and the responsibility of society towards youth;

(b) Co-ordinating mechanisms in which governments and non-governmental institutions and youth representatives can participate in the formulation and implementation of youth policies;

(c) Ways and means of bringing young people together to allow them to express their needs and aspirations and take part in decisions concerning them and organize their own activities;

(d) Reorientation of the policy process of both governmental and non-

governmental institutional sectors to give youth its proper place as a beneficiary of, and a contributor to, all aspects of national development.

The General Assembly further indicated that the national youth policy process should be wide-ranging to include both those measures directly and indirectly concerned with youth activities, as well as elements concerned with the role and place of young people in each sector and area of national life such as in: education and training, agriculture and rural development; health and the promotion of primary health care; commercial and industrial development; protection and improvement of the environment; promotion and development of the national culture; science and technology; and in community organizations, trade unions and political institutions. It clarified that the various executive programmes, legislative measures and administrative regulations related to each of these policy areas should be set out in consonance with the national objectives of each country.

The Assembly noted the need was particularly evident for national youth policies to include the following specific issues: (a) The situation of youth within a human resource development policy;
(b) Youth employment; (c) The situation of young people with respect to human settlements and the environment; (d) The role of youth in rural development; (e) The prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency; (f) Youth and culture; (g) The relationship between youth and tourism; and (h) Special categories of youth.

The Assembly indicated that national youth policies should view youth as a broad category encompassing many specific subgroups and that special attention be given to the specific needs of the more vulnerable of these subgroups as cited above. Moreover, it recommended that policies and programmes directed towards these specific youth groups be viewed in the context of integrated national policies on youth. In the formulation of such integrated national youth policies, it further recommended that emphasis should be given to the manner in which different subgroups of youth are integrated into different levels of society. Guidelines on the following subcategories of youth were presented: urban youth, rural youth, young women, young people living under the circumstances of racial discrimination, young workers, students, young migrants, disabled youth, young offenders, and young drug addicts.

The Assembly also stressed the need for a continuous development of national youth policy and suggested what was described as possible main steps in the evolution of national youth policies:

(a) The establishment of a definition of youth appropriate to national circumstances and the identification of the various subcategories of youth in the country;

(b) The identification of the needs and expectations of youth, formulation of youth policies with specific indicators of the required legislative and administrative measures to implement them, allocation of resources and identification of responsible actors;

(c) The establishment of a quantitative and qualitative profile of the social, economic, cultural and political characteristics of each subcategory of youth, with special attention to demography, political, economic, social and cultural participation: education and training; employment and unemployment; health; use of free time, sports and recreation; delinquency; and attitudes and expectations;

(d) The assessment of those elements of existing national policy that constitute a general orientation for youth policy. Such elements might include the national constitution, legislation, overall development policy and sectoral policies, as well as the international legal instruments to which the country subscribes;

(e) The identification and evaluation of the various governmental and non-governmental programmes of direct or indirect concern to youth, the resources available to them (budget, infrastructure, staff, leadership, equipment, etc.) and assessment of the categories and proportions of young people affected;

(f) The adoption of the policy by the Government and its formal enactment by the national legislative body;

(g) The widespread diffusion of policy documents and associated statements, to inform youth and all other sectors of society of the seriousness of the issues affecting youth, of the need to address those issues and to secure the effective participation of youth in society, and of the role of each sector of society in the achievement of these policy goals;

(h) The establishment of institutional arrangements and procedures designed to secure the effective integration of youth policy into national development planning, and the co-ordination of all related activities;

(i) The implementation of policy measures, with attention to the continuous and effective participation of young persons and to the establishment of efficient programme management and operational evaluation;

(j) The regular evaluation, assessment and readjustment of national youth policies.

The Assembly also addressed the matter of the need for a co-ordinating structure to assure the effective formulation and implementation of the national youth policy. In particular, it recommended that throughout the process of policy formulation and implementation, close and effective co-ordination would be desirable and may be made possible through special institutional arrangements and procedures. It indicated that it is for each country to decide what type of structure is most suitable for its needs. It recommended that the institutional arrangements could take several forms, according to national political and administration traditions and preference and that consultative

functions should involve representatives: (a) the Government; (b) youth and (c) all other appropriate sectors of society. The Assembly also indicated that the national organizational structure should make possible the effective co-operation and association of all existing youth organizations and groups, while preserving their identity and independence. At all levels within such an organization, it recommended young people should be free to participate and should be offered opportunities to undertake functions and responsibilities within its leadership.

The Assembly stressed the need for continuing advocacy on behalf of youth, and recommended that governmental and non-governmental organizations consider the impact of their decisions and action on young people, in particular the process of development that young people experience. It emphasized the importance that those who are responsible for making decisions or policies that affect youth begin a dialogue with young people, either through direct meetings or through the structures offered by youth organizations and educational institutions, so that they may become better sensitized to youth perspectives. It should be a primary aim of such a dialogue to encourage young people to contribute to decision-making and to take an active part in efforts for the development of their societies. Such a process, it concluded, would also aim at encouraging a view of youth as positive, active and creative participants in society, able to contribute to its multilateral development. At the national level, it recommended that Governments might initiate national short-, medium-, and long-term programmes to achieve over time the objectives of such a national youth policy and of the Guidelines. The progress achieved and obstacles encountered should be viewed at both national and local levels and based on the overall need for the fuller participation of young people in the entire process.

In honour of the tenth anniversary of the United Nations International Youth Year (1985-1995), the General Assembly adopted on 14 December 1995, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. By that Programme, the Assembly sought to not only make general recommendations, but also specific proposals for action. It urged Governments that had not already done so to formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy as a means of addressing youth concerns. It recommended that such action be taken as part of a continuing process of review and assessment of the situation of youth, formulation of across sectoral national youth programmes of action in terms of specific, time-bound objectives and systematic evaluation of progress achieved and obstacles encountered. It further indicated that reinforcing youth-related concerns in development activities could be facilitated through the existence of multilateral mechanisms for consultations, dissemination of information, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation. It stated that such activities should be cross-sectoral in nature and multidisciplinary in approach and should include the participation of youth-related departments and ministries, national non-governmental youth organizations and the private sector. It also called for national youth coordinating mechanisms to be appropriately strengthened for integrated national youth policies and programmes. Where such mechanisms did not exist, it urged Governments to promote their establishment on a multi-level and cross-sectoral basis. Furthermore, it cited ten priority issues to be included in such national youth policies and programmes: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women and full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making.

III. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS ON NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES

A. National level

Table 1 provides a summary of actions taken by Governments to implement these recommendations of the General Assembly on national youth policies.

Table 1. Summary of actions taken by Governments to implement the General Assembly's recommendations on national youth policy

Categories	Number	Percentage
Countries that have formulated a national youth policy (cross-sectoral	144	78
Countries that have designated a national youth coordinating mechanism (ministry, department, council, committee, etc)	164	89
Countries that have implemented a national youth programme of action (operational, voluntary services)	73	40
Countries that have taken all three types of action to implement the Programme	58	31

Detailed surveys of such Government action to formulate a national youth policy, a national youth coordinating mechanism, and a national programme of action are provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/52/60-E/1997/6), the United Nations Study on the Global Situation of Youth: Trends and Prospects 2000, Volume II, National Profiles (WCMRY/1998/CRP.3 to 5) and the United Nations Survey of Action to Design, Implement and Evaluate National Youth Policies and Programmes (WCMRY/1998/CRP.2).

The purpose of the present report is, therefore, to provide a few specific examples of best practices of success stories and to provide an overview of trends and prospects of

such government action.

Case study: The Process of Formulating and Implementing a National Youth Policy in South Africa

The democratization of South African society has offered many new opportunities and challenges to previously disadvantaged groups. Young women and men are, in particular, recognized as a vital resource whose future prospects are inextricably tied to that of the country as a whole. As President Nelson Mandela put it in May 1994, "youth are the valued possession of the nation. Without them there can be no future. Their needs are immense and urgent. They are the centre of reconstruction and development."

The National Youth Commission was established and inaugurated on 16 June 1996 by President Mandela. The Commission has been established through the National Youth Commission Act (1996) as a part of the Government's plan to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the problems and challenges facing young women and men in South Africa. The National Youth Policy which was prepared by the National Youth Commission in 1997, represents a major and historical mile stone in youth development of all young women and men. Through this policy an environment will be created where all stakeholders in youth development can work toward common goals and a better South Africa for all. In general, the objectives of the National Youth Commission are:

- to coordinate and develop an integrated National Youth Policy;
- to develop an integrated national plan that utilizes available resources and expertise for the development of young women and men which shall be integrated with the Reconstruction and Development Programme;
- to develop principles and guidelines and make recommendations to Government regarding such principles and guidelines for the implementation of the National Youth Policy;
- to coordinate, direct and monitor the implementation of such principles and guidelines as a matter of priority;
- to implement measures to redress the imbalances of the past relating to various forms of disadvantage suffered by young men and women generally or by specific groups or categories of young people;
- to promote uniformity of approach by all organs of state, including provincial governments, to matters relating to young women and men;
- to maintain close liaison with institutions, bodies or authorities similar to the National Youth Commission in order to foster common policies and practices and to promote cooperation;
- to coordinate the activities of the various provincial government institutions involved in youth matters and to link those activities to the integrated National Youth Policy; and
- to develop recommendations relating to any other matter which may affect young men and women.

The National Youth Commission is made up of 19 members (themselves young men and women) who were nominated through a public process and appointed by the

Parliament.

Five of the members serve in a full-time capacity representing young women and men across the country. Five of the part-time members also represent national interests, whilst the remaining nine part-time Commissioners represent the nine provinces. The National Youth Commission is based in the Office of the Executive Deputy President. The Deputy Minister in the Office of the Executive President has political responsibility over the National Youth Commission.

While the mandate of the National Youth Commission has been broadly defined by the Act, the National Youth Policy has identified five key areas of priority for the Commission. These are:

1. MONITORING

The National Youth Commission performs a vigilant role in monitoring youth development programmes and services. This includes central government departments as well as provincial and local governments. It also includes the monitoring of the non-government and community-based youth sector. This monitoring is important to ensure the needs and interests of young people, and the specific target groups of young people identified in the National Youth Policy, are addressed by these agencies.

2. RESEARCH AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The lack of accurate, current research on a wide range of youth development needs became sorely apparent in the process of formulating the National Youth Policy. Thus, the Commission has designed a strategy to ensure the current gaps in youth research are addressed. An outcome of this research will be the development and refinement of youth policies - particularly policy which is directed to specific sectors (e.g. health, employment) and target groups (e.g. rural young people, young women, young men and women living and working on the streets).

Research and development will include relations with other African and international organisations (e.g. the United Nations, the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the Organisation of African Unity). This will involve international liaison and participation in international and regional youth networks, such as the proposed SADC Youth Council.

3. ADVOCACY

As a consequence of its monitoring, research and policy work, the National Youth Commission advocates on behalf of young women and men, and specific target groups, for relevant programmes, services and facilities. It also promotes youth participation in decision-making and the governance of a wide range of government, parastatal and non-government organisations.

4. CAPACITY BUILDING

The limited capacity to effectively plan, establish and manage youth development programmes and services is apparent in many development organisations and government departments. The Commission works with other key stakeholders (e.g. South African Youth Council and other NAOS) to address this limitation. This involves the provision of information (including a guide on best practice in youth development), training programmes, human resource development and the development of networks. It also involves the facilitation and mobilisation of financial resources for capacity building.

5. COORDINATION AND FACILITATION

Finally, the Commission promotes the coordination of youth development services and, where possible, facilitates the creation of youth development programmes and initiatives. Coordination and facilitation, at times, requires the Commission to test or pilot particular initiative or programmes. Thus, the National Youth Commission promotes innovative youth development initiatives. An Inter-Departmental Committee on Youth Affairs has been established and chaired by the National Youth Commission to coordinate government programmes, develop a consolidated youth budget, and oversee programme implementation and integrate programmes cross-departmental lines.

In the preparation of the National Youth Policy the National Youth Commission has under taken an extensive process of consultation with youth organizations, sectoral groups, provinces as well as young women and men themselves. Through the participation of these groups in the policy formulation process, the National Youth Policy has been designed to address the major needs, challenges and opportunities of young men and women, accommodating provincial variations and specific sectoral issues.

In June 1997, the National Youth Commission held a National Youth Summit in Cape Town. This Summit drew together more than 200 delegates from major youth, political and community organisations to discuss the process of policy formulation and to create a framework and direction for the National Youth Policy. Based upon the agreements reached at the National Youth Summit an extensive process of consultation was launched.

Provincial Youth Summits were held in every province, involving more than 1,400 young people and representatives from different youth organisations. Prior to these summits, most provinces conducted Youth Hearings. These Hearings provided opportunities for young women and men to come together and discuss the major issues, challenges and needs they face which should be addressed through a National Youth Policy. Over 3,000 young women and men participated in 35 Youth Hearings held in rural and urban settings across the country.

The National Youth Commission also conducted a series of sectoral workshops and

focus groups which were specifically designed to consider the various strategy areas of the National Youth Policy. Twelve workshops and focus groups of this type were held along with a number of direct consultations between the National Youth Commission and Central Government departments.

In addition to the above consultations, the National Youth Commission received over one hundred written submissions from groups and individuals across the country, proposing a wide variety of concepts, programmes and opportunities for youth development. The Commission also drew from a range of research and consultations which had been previously undertaken by organisations such as the Joint Enrichment Project, the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) and the Joint Centre for Political and Economic Studies.

Finally, on 28 to 30 November 1997 some 167 representatives of major youth and political organisations as well as government departments gathered to review the first draft of the National Youth Policy. The National Youth Policy Summit provided an opportunity for delegates to recommend changes and to approve the first draft. Based upon the recommendations of the Summit the National Youth Commission reviewed a final draft of the policy and approved this draft on 9 December 1997.

In adopting the National Youth Policy the Government of the Republic of South Africa has not only acknowledged the value and significance of its young people; it also reflects international experience which clearly demonstrates the fundamental need for a comprehensive and holistic national youth policy providing a framework and focus for youth development by all stakeholders.

The National Youth Commission is eager to make the National Youth Policy more meaningful through a clear and practical implementation strategy. This is to be achieved through a National Youth Action Plan. Such a Plan will provide a practical statement on the implementation of the National Youth Policy, reflecting the directions, priorities and strategy areas of the Policy. The National Youth Action Plan shall be designed as a cooperative expression of all key government and non-government agencies concerned with youth development. The National Youth Action Plan shall build upon the goals and objectives of the National Youth Policy and demonstrate a holistic and synergistic response of all relevant agencies to the needs of young men and women. The plan shall clearly define the specific actions that will be undertaken; when they will be undertaken and by whom. It will also indicate what resources will be required to effectively undertake these actions. Such a document shall clearly state expected outcomes and the performance indicators through which effectiveness will be assessed.

B. Regional level

The General Assembly, recommended, in adopting the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (GA resolution 50/81, Annex) that regional non-governmental organizations, regional offices of bodies and organizations of the United Nations System and regional intergovernmental organizations concerned with youth be

invited to consider meeting on a biennial basis to review and discuss issues and trends and to identify proposals for regional and subregional cooperation. United Nations regional commissions were also invited to play an essential role through the provision of a suitable venue and appropriate input regarding regional action. They were also requested to cooperate with regional intergovernmental meeting of ministers responsible for youth, and regional IGOs and regional youth NGOs to formulate, implement, coordinate, and evaluate action at the regional level, including periodic monitoring of regional youth programmes.

The Economic and Social Council, in addition, went further on this matter in its resolution 1997/55, by inviting the United Nations regional commissions to convene such tripartite regional youth meetings on a biennial basis. During 1996-1998, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) followed up such recommendations in varying ways.

ESCAP prepared a report on the situation of youth in Asia and the Pacific (1996) and convened two regional intergovernmental conferences for senior governmental officers on youth (1996 in Beijing and 1998 in Bangkok), the latter to prepare for the first World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, and ESCAP also convened an Asia-Pacific Meeting of Youth Organizations in 1998 to prepare for the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System.

ECA prepared a report on the regional situation of youth in Africa for the first session of the Pan African Conference on Youth and Development in 1996 (Addis Ababa) and the first session of the African Youth Forum held just prior to that Conference. ECA provided the venue for both meetings in its new conference centre as well as hosted two regional youth NGO and expert meetings in 1996-97 with UNFPA, UNICEF and the DESA/Division for the Advancement of Women.

ECLAC convened a regional youth NGO meeting in Santiago in 1998, in cooperation with UNESCO , the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations (DESA/DSPD Youth Unit) and the Latin American Youth Forum (FLAJ) and the Caribbean Federation of Youth (CFY) to prepare for the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System.

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has undertaken several studies on various aspects of the situation of youth in that region over recent years (ie. drug abuse, urban settlements, poverty etc.), but no direct cooperation had been undertaken by ESCWA with the relevant youth-related IGO (League of Arab States Council of Arab Ministers of Youth and Sports) nor with the regional youth and student NGO coordinating bodies (Arab Youth Union and General Union of Arab Students: GUAS etc.). ESCAP and ECLAC have undertaken such cooperation with both regional youth-related IGOs and youth NGOs in 1996-1998, and ECA began in 1996 in conjunction with the OAU youth meetings. Regarding advisory services to assist Member States on the strengthening their national youth policies and programmes, other than ESCAP which has undertaken such activities, no such advisory services and intergovernmental meetings on youth have

been organized by the other United Nations regional commissions.

Other non-United Nations regional and inter-regional intergovernmental youth organizations have provided advisory services and convened meetings to assist governments prepare national youth policies and programmes of action (ie. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Sub-Committee on Youth Caribbean Economic Community (CARICOM Youth Section), Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), Council of Europe, Ibero-American Youth Organizations (OIJ), League of Arab States (LAS Youth and Sports Section), and Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC Youth Section).

C. Global level

From a global perspective, the concern of the world community on the matter of national youth policies and programmes can be traced to three specific phases:

PHASE ONE: 1964-1972 Francophone Group of Ministers Responsible for Youth

In 1964, UNESCO held the first international conference on youth in Grenoble, France which brought representatives of approximately 70 Member-States, with about half of those countries having ministers responsible for youth and sports (mainly in Francophone countries). As a follow-up, the Government of France hosted the First Conference of Francophone Ministers Responsible for Youth and Sports (CONFEJES) in Strasbourg, France in 1969 and the Conference set up a permanent CONFEJES Secretariat in Dakar, Senegal, in 1972, and has held regular meetings since that time.

PHASE TWO: (1983-1992) United Nations Regional Groups of Ministers Responsible for Youth

For the United Nations International Youth Year: 1985, the General Assembly allocated over US$1,000,000 for five UN regional intergovernmental preparatory meetings for IYY with each of the United Nations five regional commissions which adopted regional youth plans of action. One very positive result of those IYY UN regional meetings was that several non-UN IGOS began to hold youth minister meetings in all regions of the world in honour of the IYY:

1983: First meeting of the League of Arab States Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Youth (Rabat, Morocco, 1983). The 21st meeting of that Council was held in Cairo in 1998.

1985: First meeting of the Council of Europe's Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Youth (Strasbourg, France, 1985). The fifth meeting of that group was held in Bucharest, Romania in 1998.

1987: First meeting of the Ibero-American Youth Minister Conference (Madrid, Spain, 1987). The ninth meeting of that group will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, 1998.

1992: First meeting of the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Conference (Male, Maldives,

1992). The third meeting of this group was just held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1998.

1992: First meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Youth (Bangkok, 1992). The fourth meeting of that group was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1997.

PHASE THREE: (1996-1998) Other Regional Groups of Ministers Responsible for Youth and the holding of the first WCMRY

1996: First meeting of the Indian Ocean Commission Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Seychelles, 1996)

1996: First meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Youth Minister Conference (Islamabad, Pakistan, 1996)

1996: First meeting of the Organization of African Unity OAU Conference of Youth Ministers (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1996)

1998: First meeting of the Baltic Sea Youth Ministers (VISBY, Sweden, 1998)

1998: First meeting of the Youth Ministers of the Pacific Community (SPC, Papeete, Tahiti, 1998)

1998: First meeting of Youth Ministers of the Portuguese-Speaking Community (Porto, Portugal, 1998)

1998: First meeting of the Youth Ministers of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

1998: First World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, Portugal, 8-12 August 1998)

From a global perspective, one can conclude that the meetings of such youth ministers are taking place more regularly and in more regions and sub-regions than nearly any other grouping of governmental ministers. It is also worth noting that the global support for such initiatives came from the United Nations International Youth Year: 1985, and that the idea of convening the first session of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth came from the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth (General Assembly resolution 50/81, para 123).

In addition to the convening of meetings of governmental ministers responsible for youth, the United Nations also provided advisory services to Member-States on national youth policy. From 1970 to 1990, the United Nations Inter-regional Advisor on Youth Policies and Programmes undertook approximately 30 advisory service missions each year, on request of Member-States. When he retired in 1990, his post was redeployed and re-designated.

IV. REVIEW AND APPRAISAL: PROBLEMS ADDRESSED

A. Problems addressed

1. National level

The present report has revealed at least seven major obstacles to effective governmental action to implement an integrated national youth policy and programme of action: (a) inadequate political will to treat both the problems and potentials of youth on an inter-sectoral basis; (b) lack of a conceptual framework and follow-up to design, implement and evaluate an integrated national youth policy drawing on the various youth-related policies of the sectoral ministries and departments of the national Government and its provincial and local agencies; © low budgetary support for the design and delivery of such policies to the target constituencies; (d) lack of adequate involvement of all stakeholders (especially youth and youth organizations) in the process of formulating, implementing and evaluating integrated national youth policies and programmes; (e) insufficient training opportunities for personnel from the youth-related ministries and departments of the Government to effectively deal with youth needs and aspirations; (f) problems of defining and treating youth and its subgroups and their varied needs (for statistical purposes: children, persons aged 14 and under, youth : persons aged 15-24 years) and confusing policies and programmes of children with those for and with youth; and (g) lack of systematic national reviews of the situation of youth (jointly by governmental and non-governmental organizations most concerned and with possible participation of the private sector, which has a socio-economic interest in such surveys) and the linkage of this process to the formulation of a national youth policy. The challenge has been not only to formulate integrated national youth policies, but also to implement them at all levels (especially the provincial and local levels) involving all stakeholders in the process (especially youth and youth organizations). Such initiatives, when taken, have often not been mainstreamed into the overall national development process.

2. Regional level

There has been an uneven reaction by the United Nations regional commissions regarding the follow-up of General Assembly resolution 50/81, Annex and ECOSOC resolution 1997/55 and the need for more serious cooperation between these United Nations regional commissions and the relevant regional youth IGOs which convene regional youth minister meetings and the regional youth NGOs which convene regional meetings of youth organizations to better strengthen the capacities for formulating and implementing integrated national youth policies and programmes in the context of the World Programme of Action for Youth. The United Nations regional commissions were especially invited to convene biennial meetings to bring together these regional youth constituencies on a regular basis, but only ESCAP and ECLAC have begun to convene such regional youth meetings in cooperation with the United Nations Headquarters and UNESCO Headquarters and Regional Offices. Yet despite that progress, a review of regional intergovernmental action on youth since 1985 (the United Nations International Youth Year) has revealed that, the existing regional meetings of ministers responsible for youth have been convened by other regional intergovernmental organizations and not the United Nations regional

commissions. Many of those regional meetings of ministers responsible for youth do not include ministers from all of the United Nations Member States in each region in their meetings. The Ibero-American meetings do not include Member States from the English and French-Speaking Caribbean sub-region, the African meetings are often split between the Francophone and Anglophone States (CONFEJES and Commonwealth), and Asian meetings are restricted to the sub-regions of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Pacific Community. Such existing meetings in the Asia-Pacific region do not include the East Asia sub-region and there has not been one such meeting of ministers responsible for youth for the entire Asia-Pacific region. The activities of the regional commission, regional offices of the youth-related organizations and agencies of the United Nations system have not been sufficiently coordinated especially to strengthen the capacities of Member States and of non-governmental organizations to formulate, implement and evaluate integrated national youth polices and programmes in line with the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

3. Global level

The first initiative of the world community to stress the importance of integrated national youth policies and programmes was in 1985 for the United Nations International Youth Year. At that time, there was a wide spectrum of activity in the United Nation system to gather data, undertake research, convene meetings, and provide advisory service, on request, to Member States on national youth policies and programmes. Yet, during the consequent ten years, 1985-1995, this full spectrum of activity in the United Nations system on national youth policies and programmes declined. One of the most important losses concerned the post of the United Nations Interregional Advisor on Youth Policies and Programmes (a post re-designated in 1990 after twenty years of existence: 1970-1990). This situation put the United Nations youth programme increasingly out of touch with the country reality of national youth policies and programmes. The only way to collect data on that question was through the distribution of questionnaires and assemblage of statements on youth made in the General Assembly and ESOSOC and periodic relations with the United Nations regional commissions and United Nations Information Centres. However, one of the most important outcomes of the IYY was the creation of over 100 national IYY committees, the subsequent strengthening and/or establishment of over 100 national youth policies and programmes, and the development and growth of ministries and departments responsible for national youth policies and programmes. This IYY momentum led, as described above, to the convening of meetings of ministers responsible for youth in all five of the United Nations regions especially since 1985, and to the convening of the first session of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in 1998.

The same process concerned the problems of youth NGO meetings at the United Nations regarding national youth policies and programmes. If there had been a lack of an effective global platform for ministers responsible for youth, there has also been a lack of an effective global platform for youth NGOs (national, regional and international) and youth-related UN agencies. Beside the fact that youth (persons aged 15 to 24) seldom participated in those meetings, there was also an absence of representatives of national

youth councils, committees and other types of national youth organizations. Only four years after IYY, the General Assembly recommended in 1989 that the Secretary-General convene a meeting of youth NGOs and youth related agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to examine the problems of channels of communication between youth and the UN system and to establish effectively functioning structures to both increase such channels and to relate them to the youth projects of the United Nations system especially at the national level. That meeting, called the "World Youth Forum of the United Nations System" was convened in 1991 and brought together, for the first time, youth leaders from approximately 100 national non-governmental youth councils, committees and other national youth organizations, as well as regional and international youth organizations, and agencies of the UN system and other youth-related IGOs.

One of the priority topics of all three sessions of the World Youth Forum (1991,1996, and 1998) has been "national youth policies and programmes". Thus, the stakeholders for integrated national youth policies and programmes has become the global concern of not only governmental ministers responsible for youth, but also the most relevant representatives of civil society on this matter: youth and youth organizations (national non-governmental youth coordinating councils, committees and organizations, and regional and global non-governmental youth organizations). Yet, the problem is to better relate the two new global platforms to each other and to the priority of national youth polices and programmes and the youth-related polices and projects of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system. However, that process involves another basic problem: the operational activities of the United Nations system on youth have often not been directly related to the global standards on youth adopted by the General Assembly and the global discussions on youth policy have not often been related to such operational youth activities of the United Nations system.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. National level

For Governments, the first step is to formulate an integrated national youth policy based on the needs and aspirations of youth as seen by the young people themselves and as surveyed by the local offices of the various national ministries and departments most concerned with youth. This involves both an active youth participation in all phases of the process of examining the situation of youth and the formulation (with quantified and qualified targets) of a national youth policy from the bottom-up and not the top-down. The role of representative non-governmental youth organizations should be recognized in that regard. The youth-related agencies and organizations of the United Nations system should facilitate this process by increasing support for such holistic treatment of youth issues by Governments in cooperation with non-governmental youth organizations, and assisting the examination of the situation of youth and the formulation, implementation and evaluation of integrated national youth polices and programmes.

Inter-departmental cooperation is essential both inside each Government as well as among the operational agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental youth organizations in each country. United Nations youth theme groups

should be set up within country programmes of UNDP to provide a coordination forum for United Nations agencies and related organizations involved with projects, programmes and other activities targeting on youth. Such United Nations theme groups, as set up for example in Fiji, Malawi and Peru have assisted capacity building within the respective Government's Ministry or Department of Youth and national youth councils or other NGO youth coordinating bodies. The country representatives of UNFPA, UNICEF and UNESCO have often been in the lead in advocating and following up such initiatives. This process should be strengthened and involve all the operational agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, as well as the relevant Governmental, youth NGO and bilateral development agency donor partners in each country. The United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) should sponsor information programmes to support this national youth policy and programme process in cooperation with Governments and youth NGOs and link such activities to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The United Nations Youth Fund should be greatly strengthened and focused on this overall process of capacity-building of Governments and youth NGOs for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of national youth polices and programmes to implement the World Programme of Action for Youth.

2. Regional level

Pursuant to the General Assembly resolution 50/81, Annex: World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/55, the United Nations regional commissions were invited to convene regional youth meetings on a biennial basis, bringing together representatives of regional non-governmental youth organizations, regional offices of bodies and organizations of the United Nations system and regional intergovernmental organizations concerned with youth to review and discuss issues and trends and to identify proposals for regional and subregional cooperation related to implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth. As reviewed above, two United Nations regional commissions (ESCAP and ECLAC) have convened such regional youth meetings in cooperation with UNESCO and UNFPA in 1998 to prepare for the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, and ECA assisted the OAU convene such a regional youth meeting in 1996 in conjunction with the first session of the Pan African Conference on Youth and Development. Such biennial regional youth meetings should be scheduled on a regular basis to be held just prior to the regional meetings of ministers responsible for youth in each of the five United Nations regions so as to make recommendations to those intergovernmental ministerial meetings and to encourage Governments, youth NGOs, UN agencies and other youth-related IGOS to work together to follow-up such recommendations, especially those concerning national youth policies and programmes. The meetings could provide the needed regional infrastructure to both prepare for and follow-up the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System and a body to undertake both youth policy and project execution in each region. However, despite such mandates from both the General Assembly and Economic Council, there has not been a regular budget allocation for such regional youth meetings.

3. Global level

The General Assembly, in adopting the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, made recommendations to strengthen five global mechanisms for implementing this Programme of Action: a) the role of the United Nations Commission for Social Development in continuing its policy level-dialogue on youth for policy coordination and periodic monitoring of issues and trends; b) regular meetings at the international level, under the aegis of the United Nations, of ministers responsible for youth affairs, building on the current regional and interregional conferences of ministers responsible for youth affairs in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Western Asia; c) annual meetings of the inter-agency group on youth in which all the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system concerned and related intergovernmental organizations can participate to discuss ways and means by which they can promote the implementation of the Programme of Action on a coordinated basis; d) meetings of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System to contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action through the identification and promotion of joint initiatives to further its objectives so that they better reflect the interests of youth; and e) the role of the United Nations Youth Fund to support the implementation of the Programme of Action through pilot action to encourage the participation of youth in devising and carrying out operational projects.

The Assembly also made specific recommendations on five methods to monitor, promote and evaluate the Programme of Action: 1) data collection and dissemination of information, 2) research and policy studies, 3) planning and coordination, 4) technical cooperation, training and advisory services and 5) outreach and partnership among specialized constituencies. Initiatives have been taken on all of the above points. Those points recommended by the General Assembly, deserve serious attention by the first session of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth.

ANNEX I

Status of implementation of national youth policies, national youth coordination mechanisms and national youth programmes of action: as at June 1998

Afghanistan[b,c]
Albania[b,c]
Algeria[b,c]
Andorra[b,c]
Angola[b,c]
Antigua and Barbuda[b,c]
Argentina[b,c]
Armenia[c]
Australia[b,c,d]
Austria[b,c,d]
Azerbaijan[c]
Bahamas[b,d]
Bahrain[b,c]
Bangladesh[b,c,d]
Barbados[b,c,d]
Belarus[b,c]
Belgium[b,c,d]
Belize[b,c]
Benin[b,c]
Bhutan[c]
Bolivia[b,c,d]
Bosnia and Herzegovina[e]
Botswana[b,c,d]
Brazil[c]
Brunei Darussalam[b,c]
Bulgaria[b,c]
Burkina Faso[b,c,d]
Burundi[b,c]
Cambodia[e]
Cameroon[b,c]
Canada[b,c,d]
Cape Verde[c]
Central African Republic[b,c]
Chad[b,c]
Chile[b,c,d]
China[b,c,d]
Colombia[b,c]
Comoros[b,c]
Congo[b,c]
Costa Rica[b,c,d]
Côte d'Ivoire[b,c]
Croatia[b,c]
Cuba[b,c,d]
Cyprus[b,c,d]
Czech Republic[b,c]
Democratic People's Republic of Korea[b,c,d]
Denmark[b,c,d]
Djibouti[b,c]
Dominica[c]
Dominican Republic[e]
Ecuador[b,c]
Egypt[b,c,d]
El Salvador[c]
Equatorial Guinea[e]
Eritrea[e]
Estonia[c]
Ethiopia[b,c]
Fiji[b,c]
Finland[b,c,d]
France[b,c,d]
Gabon[b,c]
Gambia[b,c]
Georgia[c]
Germany[b,c,d]
Ghana[b,c,d]
Greece[b,c,d]
Grenada[c]
Guatemala[b,c]
Guinea[b,c]
Guinea-Bissau[c]
Guyana[b,c]
Haiti[b,c]
Honduras[b,c]
Hungary[b,c,d]
Iceland[b,c,d]
India[b,c,d]
Indonesia[b,c,d]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)[b,c,d]
Iraq[c]
Ireland[b,c,d]
Israel[b,c,d]
Italy[d]
Jamaica[b,c,d]
Japan[b,c,d]
Jordan[b,c]
Kazakstan[e]
Kenya[b,c]
Kuwait[c]
Kyrgyzstan[e]
Lao People's Democratic Republic[d]
Latvia[c]
Lebanon[b,c]
Lesotho[b,c]
Liberia[b,c]
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya[c]
Liechtenstein[b,c,d]
Lithuania[c]
Luxembourg[b,c,d]
Madagascar[b,c]
Malawi[b,c,d]
Malaysia[b,c,d]
Maldives[b,c]
Mali[b,c,d]
Malta[b,c,d]
Marshall Islands[b,c,d]
Mauritania[b,c]
Mauritius[b,c]
Mexico[a,c]
Micronesia (Federated States of)[b,c,d]
Monaco[b,c,d]
Mongolia[c]
Morocco[b,c]
Mozambique[b,c,d]
Myanmar[e]
Namibia[b,c]
Nepal[b,c]
Netherlands[b,c,d]
New Zealand[b,c,d]
Nicaragua[b,c,d]
Niger[c]
Nigeria[b,c,d]
Norway[b,c,d]
Oman[b,c]
Pakistan[b,c]
Palau[e]
Panama[b,c]
Papua New Guinea[b,c,d]
Paraguay[b,c]
Peru[b,c,d]
Philippines[b,c,d]

Poland[b,c,d]
Portugal[b,c,d]
Qatar[e]
Republic of Korea[b,c,d]
Republic of Moldova[b,c]
Romania[b,c,d]
Russian Federation[b,c,d]
Rwanda[b,c]
Saint Kitts and Nevis[b,c]
Saint Lucia[b,c]
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines[b,c]
Samoa[b,c]
San Marino[c]
Sao Tome and Principe[c]
Saudi Arabia[b,c]
Senegal[b,c]
Seychelles[b,c]
Sierra Leone[b,c]
Singapore[b,c]
Slovakia[b,c]
Slovenia[b,c]
Solomon Islands[b,c]
Somalia[e]
South Africa[b,c,d]
Spain[b,c,d]
Sri Lanka[b,c,d]
Sudan[b,c]
Suriname[b,c,d]
Swaziland[b,c]
Sweden[b,c,d]
Syrian Arab Republic[b,c,d]
Tajikistan[e]
Thailand[b,c]
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[e]
Togo[b,c]
Trinidad and Tobago[b,c,d]
Tunisia[b,c]
Turkey[b,c]
Turkmenistan[e]
Uganda[b,c]
Ukraine[b,c]
United Arab Emirates[b,c,d]
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland[b,c,d]
United Republic of Tanzania[b,c,d]
United States of America[d]
Uruguay[b,c]
Uzbekistan[e]
Vanuatu[b,c]
Venezuela[b,c,d]
Viet Nam[b,c,d]
Yemen[b,c]
Yugoslavia[b,c]
Zaire[b,c]
Zambia[b,c]
Zimbabwe[b,c,d]

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[a] The data in the present annex have been drawn from the database on youth of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat, as well as from replies from Member States to a questionnaire sent by the Secretariat in 1996.

[b] Formulation of a national youth policy (cross-sectoral).

[c] Designation of a national youth coordinating mechanism (ministry, department, council, committee, etc.).

[d] Implementation of a national youth programme of action (operational, voluntary service).

[e] No data received on national youth policies, coordinating mechanisms or programmes of action.